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2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6216

(202) 225-3951

<http://www.house.gov/judiciary>

June 16, 2003

Help Honor President John F. Kennedy's Vision for Social Justice!

**Cosponsor Legislation Recognizing President Kennedy's Founding
of Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law**

Dear Colleague:

I invite you to join me in recognizing President Kennedy's founding of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law by becoming an original cosponsor of legislation which supports designating June 21, 2003 as "Equal Justice Day" in honor of the Committee's tireless efforts over the past 40 years to secure justice and equal opportunity for all.

On June 21, 1963, John F. Kennedy convened members of the private bar to more actively advocate for the end of segregation and other discriminatory practices against African Americans. Without President Kennedy's vision for racial justice, the bar would have remained silent in the face of vocal resistance by southern state legislatures against desegregation.

For more than four decades, the Lawyers' Committee has worked to advance the civil rights of African Americans and other racial and ethnic minority communities in the areas of environmental protection, employment, affirmative action, fair housing, and voting. Among many other achievements over the years, the Lawyers' Committee was successful in:

- Fighting for passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the 1982 Amendments, Fair Housing Act of 1988, Civil Rights Act of 1991, and National Voter Registration Act of 1993.
- Operating an office in Jackson, Mississippi from 1964-1984 which filed numerous cases that transformed the State including the defense of civil rights demonstrators, desegregation, of many public institutions and workforces, reformation of the notorious Parchman Prison, and numerous voting rights cases resulting in a revolution of African American elected official in state positions in Congress.
- Securing a landmark, unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision that strengthened First Amendment protections for peaceful political boycotts in *Claiborne Hardware Co. v. NAACP*.
- Litigating a series of cases in the 70s, 80s, 90s and to the present, that desegregated police and fire departments throughout the nation notably in Miami, Birmingham, Mississippi, Cleveland, Nassau County, Buffalo and Houston.
- Coordinating a Church Burning Project in the 1990s to provide free legal assistance to churches that were destroyed during the bitter rampage of racially motivated church burnings.

By supporting the designation of June 21, 2003 as "Equal Justice Day", we will recognize the achievements of the Lawyers' Committee, as its staff and pro-bono attorneys, clients and friends commemorate and celebrate its 40th anniversary. I hope you will honor President Kennedy's commitment to implementing justice reflected in the accomplishments the Lawyers' Committee and the many hours of pro-bono service offered by lawyers and law firms throughout this country.

If you would like to become an original cosponsor, or need additional information please contact Dean Atkins at x5-2022 by 5 PM on Thursday, June 19, 2003.

Sincerely,


John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member